

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- If necessary, the resulting alkylsulfonated bisphenol compound ~~alkyl~~ alkali metal salt can be purified by solvent washing, extraction, column fractionation, and the like. Treatment of the metal salt with the aforementioned acid catalyst or an aqueous solution thereof results in removal of the alkali metal to give a sulfonic acid. The resulting sulfonic acid may be converted to another alkali metal.--

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 12, line 3 and ending on line 14, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

-- The reaction between the alkylsulfonated bisphenol compound ~~alkyl~~ alkali metal salt (the bisphenol compound of the invention) as a dihydric phenol dialkali metal salt and the aromatic dihalide is carried out using a polar solvent, such as dimethyl sulfoxide, sulfolane, N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, 1,3-dimethyl-2-imidazolidinone, N,N-dimethylformamide, N,N-dimethylacetamide, and diphenyl sulfone. The reaction temperature preferably ranges from 140° to 320°C. The reaction time is preferably 0.5 to 100 hours.

The aromatic polyaryl ether having an alkylsulfonic acid and/or an alkali metal salt thereof according to the present invention also includes copolymers having a structural unit represented by chemical formula (13) or (14) shown below which are prepared by additionally using a dihydric phenol other than the alkylsulfonated bisphenol compound ~~alkyl~~ alkali metal salt.--